

PM: Takeover of dailies not politically motivated

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RAWANG: Datuk Seri Mahathir Mohamad has refuted charges that the planned takeover of two Chinese dailies by Huaren Holdings Sdn Bhd was politically motivated.

"I think it is untrue that it (the proposed takeover) is politically motivated.

"Anybody can take over a newspaper company," he told reporters after launching the first Malaysian-made monorail train at the Monorail Malaysia Technology manufacturing plant here yesterday.

The Prime Minister said he neither supported nor objected to MCA's involvement in

the proposed takeover of the papers — *Nanyang Siang Pau* and *China Press*. (Huaren is the investment arm of MCA.)

"Of course, all newspapers in Malaysia are politically motivated, including *Harakah* (the official organ of PAS) and *Rocket* (DAP), but nobody minds that.

"But if there is any doubt at all about the Government being involved or a government party being involved, everybody gets uptight," he said.

On a news report that at least nine top executives of the two dailies had been advised to resign by next week,

Dr Mahathir said: "I would not know about it as it is not my business to look after them."

MCA president and Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, who was present at the press conference, said Huaren would proceed with the deal if it was viable.

"If it is a good deal, they (Huaren) will go ahead," he said.

Asked about a so-called "Committee Against The Takeover of Nanyang Press By MCA," he said there had been conflicting reports on the proposed deal and asked: "Which one do we listen to?"
